

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A CPP giant magnetoresistive head includes lower and upper shield layers; and a giant magnetoresistive element disposed between the upper and lower shield layers and comprising a pinned magnetic layer, a free magnetic layer, and a nonmagnetic layer disposed between the pinned magnetic layer and the free magnetic layer. The CPP giant magnetoresistive head further includes large-area nonmagnetic metal films provided directly above the lower shield layer and below the upper shield layer to make direct contact with the pinned magnetic layer and the free magnetic layer of the giant magnetoresistive element, respectively, and the large-area nonmagnetic metal films have larger areas than those of the pinned magnetic layer and the free magnetic layer, respectively. Furthermore, an antiferromagnetic layer is provided in the rear of the giant magnetoresistive element in the height direction, for pinning the magnetization direction of the pinned magnetic layer. Alternatively, the dimension of the pinned magnetic layer in the height direction is made sufficiently larger than the dimension in the track width direction so that the magnetization direction of the pinned magnetic layer is stabilized by shape anisotropy without using an antiferromagnetic layer.